

British by Chance

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2/7/04

Ironically the British Explorer is only for a non-British.

3/7/04

I took 336 from Penzance to Birmingham, then 334 from Birmingham to Glasgow, and then 336 again from Glasgow.

4/7/04

At 2pm everyday the 534 coaches cross each other at New Castle, one going to Hull, the other one to Glasgow. There are numerous plays shown in Edinburgh. One of these is a *Jacob's bladder*. The New York Times talks about 'perpetually percolating imagination.' I had adopted the expression 'percolating' in philosophy and social science before. I wonder if they had the idea from my works. Another ad is for a comedy. It shows a picture of a man standing with his head covered in a bucket. The title says, 'Judge not.' Obviously the writer of the play has never read Rūmī. He would have otherwise found the answer to all his jests if he had..

Here you have to watch out for cows crossing the road. From Hull there is only 805 to Scarborough and 18-something to Beverly. We pass Bridlington, a seaside town with promenade and fun park. The ride on 524 is wonderful, passing through rain and sunshine. The countryside is superb.

From Scarborough there are only two coaches I may take. One of these is the 563 at 8:05am to London while the other the 322 at 8:20am to Brecon. I naturally want to take this second one which will bring me to Brecon at 19:10, not that I know firsthand where the town is, but because I have been to London many times already there is no need to go there again now. The coach driver wants me to stay at his mother-in-law's bed and breakfast, the Ivy Dene. I was not interested but did not say so. He was going to call her on his mobile phone but I told him that I would look around first. Anyhow, as the sign put up in the window says, there is no vacancy there. I decide to brave the cold night outside, waiting for the coach in the morning. I am convinced I had been here before with Aoife.

5/7/04

I don't know much about sufism but Rūmī is one of the best, whatever you call it.

Last night it must have been dark from 11pm until 3am only. There were two sources of light behind the cloud, one from the moon, then there was the sun.

The 322 goes from Scarborough via Birmingham and Cardiff to Brecon.

Brecon is an affable and lovable town. It makes you feel safe. There is a walking path called the Taff trail, which passes through the town. There is a Christ College founded in 1541 when the College of Prebends moved by order of Henry VIII from Abergwili near Carmarthen to Brecon.

The seat inside a small park was very cold during the night but not too much so.

6/7/04

A river passes through the town. The toilet here, near the promenade, opens 24 hours. Inside it is warm. I should have known last night. I could have been here all night where it is warmer than at the garden which, even though nicer under the stars, was dewy and cold.

At the Cathedral Church of St John Evangelist (Brecon Cathedral) tombstones are used as pavement stones. The is one 'IN memory of ANN Wife of ROGER EVANS of this Town Mason, who died Jan^{ry} 15th 1821 Aged 34 Years.'

Dear Husband now my Life is past,
My love to you so long did last;
Now after me no Sorrows take,
But love my Children for my sake.

I took a 322 again from Brecon to Cardiff. It is a hot day today in Cardiff, a perfect day, clear sky with everywhere a hazy trail of jets flying.

Port Talbot is a small town. There are several petrol-chemistry and mineral processing plants just east of it. The town itself is near the sea

but not immediately seaside. From the coach station I could not find my way to the sea. The ground in this area is very knobbly. There are vast stretches of lumpy land.

At the station a man talked to me in Welsh, which I could not understand. I said that I was going to Newport. He must have repeated to me the name of that place in Welsh which I could not catch. I asked him the time. He asked a staff in Welsh, then told me in English it was two o'clock. I walked to the display screen to see what time it said. When I came back he was already gone, probably thought I tried to avoid his company. I shall learn to use Welsh.

My British Explorer expires today. But I could not get on the last coach before midnight to go to Manchester because the coach was full. So I got on another coach to go to, I think, Heathrow Airport. But a conductor got on board after we have started to tell me that I would need to buy a ticket anyhow from there to Manchester because it was my fault having missed my coach. So I grumbled and said what kind of hospitality this was, for the British Explorer was only sold to a non-British, and they did not let you reserve your seats but when you can not get on a coach because it was full it is your fault. I decided to get off at Golders Green. Rather walk the street and be with God than be among men and fear their heart.

I did not know how to go back to the Victoria Station, so I walked to the Golders Green Police Station to ask for the way. But it was closed. I picked up the phone in front of it and talked to a policeman. He told me to walk back towards Golders Green Station, then turn right at the first traffic light on to Hoop Lane, then right on to Golders Green Road, Brent St, right Church Road, two double-crossings right and Aprodrome Road or something. I lost count and asked him to repeat the information again. He told me again, but it was too complicated. The nearest police station that was open seemed to be very far away. The names of the streets are unfamiliar to me and I was not sure if I had got them right. A man and a woman passed by and said you never ask a police for help in this country.

7/7/04

I walked according to the vague instruction, and found my way all right in the beginning but lost it completely towards the end. There were suspicious cars which seemed to have passed me more than once. And there were others that stopped and waited for me to pass them by, which I tried to avoid.

Near a subway passing under a small road I lay down on the soft grass to get some sleep after it was light. Tonight it was not at all cold, which was fortunate for me because neither before or after this were there normally such nights as this. I managed to get very little sleep, then carried on walking along a motorway going north. I planned to hitch-hike my way to Manchester, but then changed my mind, bought a day tube ticket and went instead to the British Library.

I went back to Victoria Station and complained that the coach unkindly left me at Golders Green last night, and I had to walk all my way back here. I said that I missed my last coach but it was not my fault. The Custom Services of National Express then gave me a special ticket to go back to Manchester. The ticket had the company logo on top, then 'National Express Authority to Travel, ticket no. T1279823, Journey to Manchester, Reference WFGW, service number 540, Time of Travel 1700, Date of travel 07/07/04, number of pax. one adult only.'